



6 Ways to Say NO

(without the anxiety or guilt...)



Why is learning to say No so important?

In our world brimming with seemingly endless opportunities and constant demands, saying No with conviction can at times be very difficult. Yet, it is this simple two-letter word that is the key to personal & professional well-being. Learning to say No is not simply a way of setting boundaries; it is a skill that empowers us to navigate our seemingly endless obligations with greater ease and conviction.

Our inability to say No often stems from a fear of disappointing others, of missing out on opportunities, or of being perceived as uncooperative. However, the effect of saying yes to every request or demand can be profound, leading to resentment, burnout, and a dilution of our true priorities. The long-term repercussions of porous personal and professional boundaries include strained relationships, diminished productivity, sleepless nights, low self-esteem, financial woes, creativity blocks, and reduced physical, mental, and emotional health. The ability to say No is not a sign of selfishness but rather a declaration of self-respect.

At the heart of this issue lie our boundaries – the invisible lines that define our personal and professional needs and limits. Saying No is not a rejection; it's a reinforcement of those boundaries, a declaration that our time, energy, and resources are finite and need to be protected so that we can bring our best selves forward in every situation.

I genuinely believe in you and your ability to create and honour the boundaries that will serve you best. My wish is that this guide will equip you with everything you need to say No with grace and confidence.

kip xo

6 Ways to say No

(Print this page for a quick reference guide!)

1. **The Direct No**
"I'm not able to help you."
(No explanation needed.)

2. **The Deferred No**
"I can't right now, but I
could next Friday."

3. **The Repeat No**
"I understand, and my
answer is still no."

4. **The Paused No**
"I'll get back to you on
that tomorrow."

5. **The Rationalized No**
"I am unable to help you
with that because..."

6. **The Delegated No**
"I can't, but Emily has
expertise in that - why
not ask her."

Resentment- &
Guilt-Free
Zone

The Direct No

The Direct No can be one of the most difficult ways of refusing a request, but it is also the most efficient and empowering way to do so. With this option, no explanation is necessary. You are simply saying no and leaving it at that.

The reason this refusal is so difficult for many people is that they feel they need to justify their response. But there are times when no justification is needed:

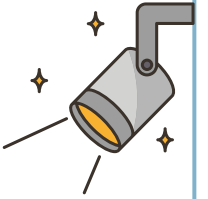
- when you don't feel safe and need to remove yourself from the situation immediately
- when someone is trying to manipulate or "guilt" you into doing something
- when an explanation would only invite a counter-argument from the person asking

When we're clear that what we're being asked isn't something we want or need to do, a direct and simple no is the best option. And no apology is necessary either - you are honouring your boundaries and demonstrating true self-respect.

Examples: *"No, I'm not interested in that."*

"No, I'm not able to help you."

1.



2.

The Deferred No

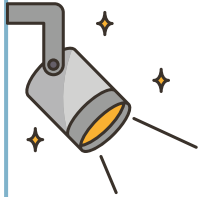
The Deferred No is a good answer when you don't have the time right now, but you will have the time (and a genuine interest) to help out later. The key to this type of refusal is to be honest about how much time and interest you actually have.

In other words, using the Deferred No as a means of putting off something you have no intention of doing later is not a good option. Instead of giving you confidence, it erodes your self-esteem and keeps you out of integrity.

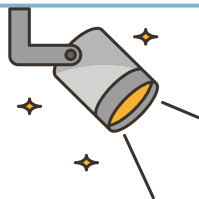
When you use this type of No, be sure to put the deferred discussion about it in your calendar right away so that the person asking sees you are sincere about wanting to explore the possibilities at a future date.

Examples: *"I can't help you now, but I'll have more time next Wednesday. Let's discuss it then."*

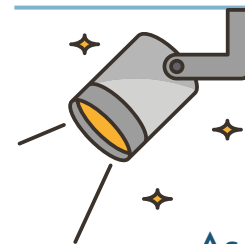
"Why don't you come by my office at the end of the day today when I'll be less distracted. We can go over the details then."



3.



The Repeat No



This type of No is also referred to as “The Broken Record No.” It’s used in very specific situations when the person asking for your help is very persistent and just won’t take no for an answer.

The key to using this type of No effectively is to resist the temptation to engage in conversation about the issue in any way. This can be hard, especially if the other person is skilled at emotional manipulation or seems to have an answer for every reason you provide for the No.



As soon as you recognize the person isn’t hearing your reasons for the refusal, stop and switch tactics. Instead of explaining why you can’t do what you’re being asked to do, simply repeat that you’re unable to help.

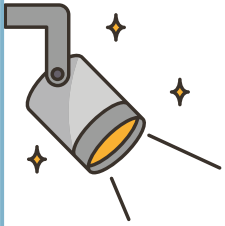
Briefly acknowledge what the person has said and then repeat the no. Be sure to avoid using the word “but” with your Repeat No, as that little word tends to make people defensive. Using “and” instead is more positive and will create a quicker end to the uncomfortable discussion.

Examples:

“I understand what you’re saying, and I’m not able to help you with that.”

“Yes, I hear that, and I’m unable to assist you with this.”

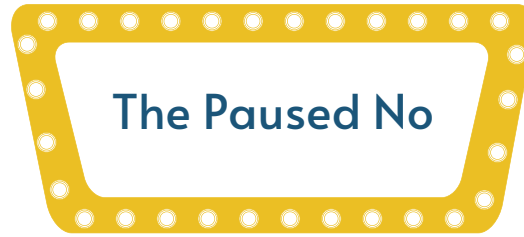
“I do understand, and my answer is no.”



Examples:

“Can I get back to you on that?”

“I’ll have to get back to you after I’ve had time to look over what you’ve given me here.”



The Paused No

4.

Sometimes we need more information before we can give an answer, and sometimes we just need to remove ourselves from a high-pressure pitch. In those instances, the Paused No is a great option.

Saying yes to something under pressure too often results in regret, frustration, or resentment.

If you find yourself saying yes to things you really don’t want to agree to because someone is putting pressure on you to respond immediately, remember that it’s not merely a good idea to pause before responding, it’s actually the best option.

Letting the person know you need some time before you can respond gives you the space to consider your reply carefully. Once you’re removed from the tense situation, you’ll more easily be able to make a decision that’s aligned with your values.



The Rationalized No

5.

The most commonly-used refusal is the Rationalized No. This is best for any situation in which your response needs to be backed up with one or more solid reasons.

As with any of these No options, the goal here is to be clear and straightforward so that there is no misunderstanding about what you're saying.

There are also some important secondary goals, which include not offending the other person, maintaining a respectful approach, avoiding burnout from being stretched too thin, and leaving space for the things you do want to come into your life.

The best way to deliver the Rationalized No is to begin by thanking the individual. Next, deliver the No clearly and unambiguously, and follow it up with your reasons.

Avoid the temptation to make up excuses that aren't true, as this will have the same eroding impact on your self-esteem as saying yes to things you really don't want to do. Finally, let the individual know that you're grateful he or she thought of you, and end the conversation there.

Examples:

"Thank you for asking. I have other commitments that are my priority right now, so I must say no. I really appreciate your interest, and I wish you luck with it!"

"I'm grateful for the offer. I don't have the capacity to help you with this, so my answer is no. Thank you again for considering me."

(Note that you may need to switch to the Repeat No or the Direct No if you are not being heard.)



6.

The Delegated No

Sometimes we know we would like to help but we recognize that we just aren't the best person to do the job. In this situation, a great solution is to make one or more suggestions about who else could step in instead. This demonstrates a willingness to be part of the solution, even if only indirectly, and helps maintain a good relationship with the individual who is asking.

If the person you're recommending isn't known to the individual, offer to set up an introduction either electronically or face-to-face, depending on the situation. Make it a priority if you offer to do this. Check with the the person you're recommending before doing the introduction to ensure he or she has both the capacity and the willingness to help.

Examples:

"I wish I could help, but my schedule just won't allow it right now. However, I know Jasmine has done a lot of great work in this area and she may be able to assist you. I'll check with her and let you know by the end of the day."

"I appreciate your asking, but I'm definitely not the best person to help with that. I have an alternative idea though, so let me look into it and I'll get back to you as soon as I can."





ABOUT KIP

Kip Clarke is an award-winning teacher, confidence coach, community leader, and elite athlete. She helps smart, ambitious, outwardly-successful women reclaim their innate power so that they can create a life that feels as good on the inside as it looks on the outside.

A MESSAGE FROM KIP

Congratulations, you've just equipped yourself with some high-level communication skills for navigating life's demands without the unnecessary baggage. As you close this guide, remember: Saying no isn't just about setting boundaries; it's about reclaiming your time, energy, and worth as an intentional human being. Your future self will thank you for honing this art.

If you're ready to kick it up a notch and truly craft a life you love, one where saying No becomes your strength, let's talk! Imagine a life where every Yes aligns perfectly with your goals and passions. Intrigued?

Let's turn those dreams into plans and those plans into reality. Your journey to a more intentional and fulfilling life starts now.

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